

Garry Sparks

Associate Professor of Religious Studies

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Academic Employment

2019-present *Associate Professor of Religious Studies*, George Mason University
2014-2019 *Assistant Professor of Religious Studies*, George Mason University
2012-2014 *Assistant Professor of Humanities (Global Study of Christianity)*, University of Louisville
2011-2012 *Visiting Assistant Professor in the Humanities and Theology*, Valparaiso University
2009-2010 *Instructor*, The University of Chicago

Education

2011 Ph.D. *with distinction*, The University of Chicago – Theology & Religious Studies
2004 M.Div., The University of Chicago – Theology & Religious Studies
1996 M.A., University of Texas at Austin – Latin American Studies (Anthropology & History)
1993 B.A., Austin College, Sherman, Texas – Philosophy & Spanish
1990-1991 Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain

Teaching Interests and Courses

Primary: Mesoamerican Studies (Religions, (Ethno)Histories, Cultures)
Hemispheric (Global) Study of Christianities
Modern Christianities (1500-present)
Histories of Christian Thought (Religious, Ethical, Philosophical)

Secondary: Native American Religious Movements (North and South America)
Latin American Studies (Religions)
Theories of Religion
Comparative Religions, History of Religions

courses: Introduction to Religious Studies: Theories and Methods
Text and Contexts I & II (year-long intensive for first-year honors students)
Religion and Literature: Native Mesoamerica
Religion and Film: Beyond Christ-types and “Reel Religion” Puns
Native American Religions in Northern America
Spiritual Autobiography: Construals of “Self” and “Religion”
Introductory Survey of Christian Thought: Antecedents to Present
Introduction to Catholicism: A Christianity and Cultures
Mendicants and Mesoamericans in the Sixteenth Century
Modern Christian Thought and Critics: From the Enlightenment to L.A. Gangs
Religion and Revolution in Latin America: Liberation Theology (1960s-1980s)

Academic Publications

Books

- Rewriting Maya Religion: Domingo de Vico, K'iche' Intellectuals, and the Theologia Indorum* (University Press of Colorado, 2019).
- The Americas' First Theologies: Early Sources of Post-Contact Indigenous Religion*. With Frauke Sachse and Sergio Romero. (Oxford University Press, 2017).

Journal Articles (peer reviewed)

- "Maya Moral and Ritual Discourse: The Dialogical Groundings for Consuetudinary Law." *Journal of Religious Ethics* 46, no. 1 (March 2018): 88-123.
- "How 'Bout Them Sapotes: Mendicant Translations and Maya Corrections in Early Indigenous Theologies." *CR: The New Centennial Review* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 213-244.
- "Primeros folios, folios primeros: Una breve aclaración acerca de la *Theologia Indorum* y su relación intertextual con el Popol Wuj." *Voces: Revista semestral del Instituto de Lingüística e Interculturalidad* 9, no. 2 (July-December 2014): 91-142.
- "The Use of Mayan Scripture in the Americas' First Christian Theology." *Numen (International Review for the History of Religions)* 61, no. 4 (August 2014): 396-429.
- "Constructing Hyperlocal Theologies: Ethnohistorical Contextualization of Indian Theology and *jTatik* Samuel's Legacy." *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology* 19, no. 1 (November 2013): 33-53.
- "Fill in the Middle Ground: Intertextuality and Interreligious Dialogue in 16th-Century Guatemala." *Journal of Inter-Religious Dialogue* 5, no. 2 (February 2011).

Chapter Contributions

- "Shifts in Semantic Souls, Transmigration of Meanings: From a Mendicant toward a Maya Theory of Translation." *Time, Space, Matter in Translation*. Edited by Pamela Beattie, Simona Bertacco, Tatjana Soldat-Jaffe (under contract with Routledge, in process).
- "Books and/as Idols: Affective Discourse in Early Colonial Dominican and Maya Writings." *The Transatlantic Bartolomé de las Casas: Lascasian Heritage, Indigenous Cultures, Scholastic Thought, and Historical Reception*. Edited by Rady Roldán-Figueroa and David Thomas Orique (Brill, forthcoming).
- "Modes of Interpretation of Indigenous Religious Ethics (of the Americas)." *The Encyclopedia of Religious Ethics*. Edited by William Schweiker, Maria Antonaccio, Elizabeth Bucar, and David Clairmont. (5,600 words; Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming).
- "Mendicants and Mesoamericans." In *Encyclopedia of Global Middle Ages*. Edited by Aaron Hollander and Massimo Rondolino (3,000 words; Bloomsbury/Arc-Humanities Press, 2021).
- "Proemio." *La Theologia Indorum en BnF Manuscrit Américain 10 por Fray Domingo de Vico, tomo I: Paleografía y traducción K'iche'-español*. Edited by Saqijix Candelaria López Ixcoy (Instituto de Investigación y Proyección sobre Diversidad Sociocultural e Interculturalidad, Universidad Rafael Landívar, 2017), ix-xxxi.
- "A Sixteenth-Century Priest's Fieldnotes among Highland Maya: Proto-*Theologia* as *Vade mecum*." With Frauke Sachse. *Words and Worlds Turned Around: Indigenous Christianities in Latin America*. Edited by David Tavárez (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2017), 102-123.

Academic Publications, continued

Chapter Contributions, continued

- “Nuevas campañas de extirpación de idolatría.” *Movimientos sociales y teología en América Latina* (La Paz, Bolivia: Instituto Superior Ecuménico Andino de Teología, 2010), 116-123.
- “Rumbo a una nueva Teología de la Liberación.” *Movimientos sociales y teología en América Latina* (La Paz, Bolivia: Instituto Superior Ecuménico Andino de Teología, 2010), 209-212.

Book Reviews (invited)

- Mondloch, James and Robert Carmack, *Popol Wuj: Nueva traducción y comentarios* (Guatemala: Publicaciones Mesoamericanas, 2018) in *Latin American Antiquity* 30, no. 2 (May 2019): 456-457.
- MacKenzie, C. James, *Indigenous Bodies Maya Minds: Religion and Modernity in a Transnational K'iche' Community* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2016) in *Ethnohistory* 65, no. 2 (April 2018): 332-333.
- Prieto, Andres I., *Missionary Scientists: Jesuit Science in the Spanish South America, 1570-1810* (Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 2011) in *History of Religions* 53, no. 1 (August 2013): 107-110.
- Westhelle, Vitor, *After Heresy: Colonial Practices and Post-Colonial Theologies* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2010) in *The Journal of Religion* 91, no. 1 (January 2012): 141-143.
- Molesky-Poz, Jean, *Contemporary Maya Spirituality: The Ancient Ways are Not Lost* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006) in *The Journal of Religion* 87, no. 4 (October 2007): 663-664.

Current Projects

- Pastoral Fieldnotes: Edition and Commentary of a Sixteenth-century Missionary Handbook from the Maya Highlands*, with Frauke Sachse.
(book project; contract pending; joint publication with University Press of Colorado and Library of Congress Press, subvention from the Jay I. Kislak Foundation; critical transcription complete; scanning of the manuscript, commentary and translation in process)
- Research Project Website: *Theologia Indorum*, Volumes I and II: <https://theologia.chnm.org/>
(digital images of the American Philosophical Society manuscript and working drafts of critical transcription and English and Spanish translations; in process)
- The Theologia Indorum, Volume I: Critical English Translation, K'iche' Transcription, and Analysis*, with Frauke Sachse, Saqijix Candelaria López Ixcoy, and Sergio Romero.
(book project; funded by a 2016-2019 NEH Scholarly Translations Grant; transcription complete; translation and commentary in process; proposal submitted to a university press)
- La Theologia Indorum, Volumen I: Traducción y transcripción crítica* with Frauke Sachse, Saqijix Candelaria López Ixcoy, and Sergio Romero.
(book project; funded by a 2016-2019 NEH Scholarly Translations Grant; transcription complete; translation and commentary in process for academic publication)

Academic Presentations

- 2021/08 "A Legacy of Fr. Domingo de Vico's 'Theology of the Indians': A Summa Americana"
invited lecture and seminar
Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D.C.
- 2021/05 "Deity Droppings: Tracking Maya and Christian Doctrines of Divinity"
invited lecture
Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago
- 2021/01 "Shifts in Semantic Souls, Transmigration of Meanings: From a Mendicant toward
a Maya Theory of Translation"
panel: "Translation: Temporality, Spatiality, and Materiality"
Modern Language Association, Toronto, Canada (online session due to COVID-19)
- 2020/08 "Manuscriptos del siglo XVI: *Theologia Indorum*"
panel presentation with Lic. Saqijix Candelaria Dominga López Ixcoy, M.A.
V Semana Científica, Universidad Rafael Landívar, Guatemala
- 2019/07 "Idoling Around with God(s) in Guatemala: Tracing Las Casas's Theological Legacy
among Highland Maya"
panel: "Las Casas and Amerindian Cultures / Las Casas y las Culturas Amerindias"
II International Conference on Bartolomé de las Casas, Providence College, Rhode Island
- 2019/03 "The (Re)Development of Mayan Languages and Literature"
invited lecture: National Foreign Language Week Celebration
Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland
- 2018/10 "Rewriting Maya Religion: An Ethnohistory of Christianities"
keynote lecture and colloquium, Departments of Religious Studies & Latin American Studies
University of Texas at Austin
- 2018/07 "Chaoskampf K'iche'lense: Batalla entre dioses mayas y cristiano en los textos en
idiomas mayas por dominicos y K'iche' Maya en el siglo XVI"
panel: "Dios(es) y diablos: La traducción de conceptos cristianos e indígenas en textos religiosos
de las Américas"
56th International Congress of Americanists, biennial meeting 2018, Salamanca, Spain
- 2018/06 "Books and/as Idols: Discourse of Affectivity in Early Colonial Missionary and Native
Mesoamerican Writings 2.0"
panel: "Expanding the Geography of Emotions History"
Emotions History Conference, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia
- 2018/03 "Early Theological and 'Idolatrous' Production in the Americas"
workshop paper/talk: Religion in the Americas Workshop
Department of Religion, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey
- 2018/02 "Books and/as Idols: Discourse of Affectivity in Early Colonial Missionary and Native
Mesoamerican Writings 1.0"
session: Early Modern Global History Seminar Series, Georgetown University
- 2017/10 "Maya Mapping Missionaries: Geo-theological Scope through K'iche'an Land Deeds"
panel: "Histories of Space and Hierarchy: Indigenous Socio-Political Boundaries in Colonial
Highland Guatemala"
American Society for Ethnohistory (ASE) annual meeting 2017, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
- 2017/10 "Tracing Traditional Maya Moral Discourse in Contemporary Customary Law"
meeting: Association of Disciples Theological Discussion (ADTD)
Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana
- 2017/09 "Translating God(s): Intertextuality between Missionary and Maya Literature"
invited lecture, Department of Comparative Literature
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Academic Presentations, continued

- 2017/03 “Religiously Appropriating Indios: 20th- and 16th-Century Theological Production from and by... well, ‘Indios’”
symposium: “Mestizaje, Hybridity, and Cultural Entanglements in Colonial Latin America”
Meso-America Panel, Hispanic Division of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
- 2017/01 “From Proto-*Theologia* to K’iche’an *Títulos*: Dialogical Tracings of Maya Catholicism”
panel “Native Religions in Colonial Latin America: A Comparative Symposium”
American Historical Association (AHA) annual meeting 2017, Denver, Colorado
- 2016/11 “Sixteenth-Century Dominicans’ Fieldnotes among the Maya: Kislak Ms 1015”
panel: “Christian Visions and Memories of Conversion and Difference”
American Academy of Religion (AAR) annual meeting 2016, San Antonio, Texas
- 2016/03 “From Hispano-Catholicism to Maya Catholicism: A Reception Ethnohistory of a Christianity”
panel: “Possessing Religious Indigeneity: Translation, Conversion, and Reception of Religious Identity in and by Indigenous America”
Mid-Atlantic Region of the American Academy of Religion (MAR-AAR) annual meeting 2016, New Brunswick, New Jersey
- 2014/10 “How ‘Bout Them Sapotes? Mendicant Translations and Maya Corrections in Early Indigenous Theologies”
symposium: “Translation and the Global Humanities”
University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky
- 2014/10 “Maya and Mendicant Religious Meta-Discourse: Recreating Transmission/ Reception History of Hispano-Catholicism of the 1500s”
panel: “Reappraising the Use of Indigenous Language Documents in the Reconstruction of K’iche’ Ethnohistory”
American Society for Ethnohistory (ASE) annual meeting 2014, Indianapolis, Indiana
- 2014/10 “The Use of the *Theologia Indorum* in the Popol Wuj: A Maya Response”
meeting: Association of Disciples Theological Discussion (ADTD)
Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana
- 2014/06 “Primeros folios, folios primeros: Una breve aclaración acerca de la *Theologia Indorum* su relación intertextual con el Popol Wuj,”
conference: “El concepto del tiempo en el Popol Wuj”
Universidad Rafael Landívar, Guatemala City, Guatemala
- 2014/02 “Maya Moral & Ritual Discourse: Dialogical Groundings for Consuetudinary Law”
conference: “Moral Voices of Latin America”
Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona
- 2013/11 “Beyond Mere Maya Resistance: Use of Mendicant and Pre-Hispanic Ritual Discourse in Sixteenth-Century Mesoamerican Documents”
panel “Mesoamerican/Indigenous Religion and Ritual in Precolonial/Colonial Periods”
American Academy of Religion (AAR) annual meeting 2013, Baltimore, Maryland
- 2013/02 “The Use of Maya ‘Scripture’ in the Americas’ First Theology,”
invited lecture “The Medieval and Renaissance Workshop (Med/Ren)”
University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky
- 2012/11 “Constructing Hyperlocal Theologies: Ethnohistorical Contextualization of ‘Indian Theology’ and *jTatik* Samuel’s Legacy,”
panel: “Indigenous Theologies, Autochthonous Churches, and Political Missions: Honoring the Pastoral Legacy of the Late Bishop Samuel Ruiz García of Chiapas”
American Academy of Religion (AAR) annual meeting 2012, Chicago, Illinois
- 2012/07 “Religious Translation, Dialogical Encounters in the Americas’ First Theologies”
panel: “Maya Languages and Histories”
54th International Congress of Americanists (ICA), Vienna, Austria

Academic Presentations, continued

- 2010/10 “Interreligious Theology: Present and Past”
invited lecture W.E. Garrison Theology Colloquium
Eureka College, Eureka, Illinois
- 2009/11 “Fill in the Middle Ground: Intertextual Dialogue in Guatemala”
panel: “Revisiting Middle Grounds: Early Christian Encounters with Religious Others”
American Academy of Religion (AAR) annual meeting 2009, Montréal, Canada
- 2009/11 “European and Indigenous Encounters in Colonial America”
History Channel Seminar Series program (one-day seminar)
Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois
- 2009/08 “Teología de la liberación en el siglo XXI”
conference: “Movimientos sociales y teología en América Latina”
Instituto Superior Ecuaménico Andino de Teología (ISEAT), La Paz, Bolivia
- 2009/08 “Nuevas campañas de extirpación de idolatría,”
conference: “Movimientos sociales y teología en América Latina”
Instituto Superior Ecuaménico Andino de Teología (ISEAT), La Paz, Bolivia
- 2009/04 “*Theologia Indorum*: K’iche’, Theological Ethnology, and Americas’ First Theology”
Sharpe-Hoover Lectures Conference: “Culturing Theologies, Theologizing Cultures”
The Martin Marty Center of the Divinity School, The University of Chicago
- 2009/01 “Mission in a Globalizing World”
panel chair; conference: “Resisting Mission: Redefining Engagement”
The Martin Marty Center of the Divinity School, The University of Chicago
- 2004/10 “Maya Spirituality/Christian Faith: A Typology of Interreligious Dialogue”
panel: “Christianity as Social Broker: Religious Mediation in Central America”
Latin American Scholars Association (LASA), 2004 annual meeting, Las Vegas, Nevada

Conferences Organized

- 2009/11 “Revisiting Middle Grounds: Early Christian Encounters with Religious Others”
Comparative Theology Group, panel session
American Academy of Religion (AAR) annual meeting 2009, Montreal, Canada
- 2009/04 Sharpe-Hoover Conference: “Culturing Theologies, Theologizing Cultures”
The Martin Marty Center of the Divinity School, The University of Chicago, Illinois
- 2009/01 Lilly Conference: “Resisting Mission: Redefining Engagement”
The Martin Marty Center of the Divinity School, The University of Chicago, Illinois

Fellowships and Awards

2021	Career Development Faculty Research Development Award, GMU (\$6,000)
2020	American Academy of Religion, Collaborative International Research Grant (\$5,000)
2017	provost nomination as applicant for Virginia "Rising Star" Outstanding Faculty Award
2016	provost letter of recognition for outstanding teaching in a Mason Core course
2016-2019	NEH Scholarly Translations Grant (\$290,000; no-cost extension through 2022)
2016	Mathy Junior Faculty Research Award in the Arts and Humanities (\$6,000)
2016	NEH Summer Research Grant (\$6,000)
2014	Richard & Constance Lewis Fellowship in Latin American & Iberian Studies, University of Louisville (awarded but declined)
2010-2011	Mellon Humanities Dissertation Fellowship, The University of Chicago
2009-2010	Martin Marty Center Dissertation Fellowship, The University of Chicago
2008-2009	Alma Wilson Teaching Lectureship Fellowship, The University of Chicago
2008-2010	Edward Scribner Ames Scholarship of High Achievement in Educational Studies
2008 & 2009	Provost's Summer Fellowship, The University of Chicago
2008	Latin American Studies Tinker Field Research Grant, The University of Chicago
2008	Doolittle-Harrison Research Fellowship, The University of Chicago
	Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (FLAS), U.S. Dept. of Education
2005-2006	- for K'iche' Maya language and culture study
summer 2005	- for Kaqchikel Maya language and culture study
1994-1995	- for Portuguese (Luso-Brazilian) language study
2004-2006	Divinity School Doctoral Studies Scholarship, The University of Chicago
2004	Norman Perrin Memorial Prize, The University of Chicago

Professional Affiliations

American Society for Ethnohistory (ASE)
American Academy of Religion (AAR)
Latin American Scholars Association (LASA)
Pre-Columbian Society of Washington, D.C. (PCSWDC)
Guatemala Scholars Network (GSN)

Languages

English	(native)
Spanish	(fluent)
K'iche' Maya	(advanced; colonial and modern)
Kaqchikel Maya	(intermediate; colonial and modern)
Portuguese	(reading; Luso-Brazilian, intermediate speaking)
French	(reading)
Biblical Hebrew	(reading)

Academic Service and Professional Experience

- 2021-present *Chair*, Judaic Studies Search Committee, Religious Studies Dept.
- 2020-present *Member*, Curriculum Committee, College of Humanities & Social Sciences (CHSS)
- 2020-present *Co-facilitator*, Religious Studies Reading Group, Center for Humanities Research
- 2020-2021 *Member*, Department Chair Search Committee, Religious Studies Dept.
- 2020-2021 *Member*, Advisory Committee, Kislak Collection Exhibition, Library of Congress
- 2020 *Reviewer*, article submission for Oxford University Press
- 2020 *Reviewer*, manuscript submission for University Press of Colorado
- 2020 *Member*, CHSS Evaluation Committee for 2021 NEH Summer Stipend Applications
- 2019-present *Director of Undergraduate Programs* for the Religious Studies Dept.
- 2019-present *Member*, Advisory Committee, [The Maya Book Project](#) (nonprofit)
- 2019-2020 *Chair*, Academic Performance Review Committee, Religious Studies Dept.
- 2019-2020 *Member*, Post-Doc Search Committee, Religious Studies Dept.
- 2019 *Member*, CHSS Evaluation Committee for 2020 NEH Summer Stipend Applications
- 2019 *Member*, NEH Grant Applications Review Panel
- Spring 2019 *Member*, New CHSS Building Installation Art Committee
- Spring 2019 *Member*, Selection Committee, CHSS Dean's Undergraduate Challenge Awards
- 2018-2020 *Member*, Faculty Grievance Committee, College of Humanities & Social Sciences
- 2017-2020 *Member*, Academic Performance Review Committee, Religious Studies Dept.
- Fall 2017 *Member*, Standing Committee for Mason Core Courses, College of Humanities & Social Sciences (off for research leave beginning in Spring 2018)
- Fall 2017 *Member*, Mason Core Committee and Office of Undergraduate Education's Assessment for Western Civilization/World History Core Courses
- Fall 2017 *Contributor*, Mason Core Committee and Office of Undergraduate Education's Assessment for Global Understanding Core Courses
- 2017 *Reviewer*, manuscript submission for *Religion Compass* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.)
- 2016-present *Member*, Editorial Board, *International Journal of Latin American Religions*
- 2016-2017 *Member*, Department Chair Search Committee, Religious Studies Dept.
- 2016-2017 *Member*, Faculty Search Committee (Buddhist Philosophy and Ethics)
- 2015 *Reviewer*, manuscript submission for DeGruyter Publishing House
- 2015 *Reviewer*, manuscript submission for the journal *Ethnohistory* (Duke University Press)
- 2015-2019 *Member*, Annual Faculty Evaluation Committee, Religious Studies Dept.
- 2015-2017 *Member*, Faculty Grievance Committee, College of Humanities & Social Sciences
- 2015-2016 *Co-chair*, Religion of the Americas Section, Mid-Atlantic Region of the AAR
- 2014-present *Member*, Alumni Council, The University of Chicago Divinity School

Additional Professional Experience and Service, continued

- 2011-2016 *Consultant and editor on Margarito's Forest / El bosque de don Margarito / Ri K'iche'laj rech tat Margarito* by Andy Carter (a modern Maya children's illustrated story published in K'iche', Spanish, and English)
- 2008-2009 *Teaching Assistant*, The College at the University of Chicago
courses:
K'iche' Mayan Language I, II, & III (Prof. Robin Shoaps)
Latin American Civilization II: Colonial Period (Prof. Mauricio Tenorio)
Humanities Core: Reading Culture (Prof. Melissa Adams)
Summer K'iche' Course in Guatemala (Profs. Rusty Barrett, Sergio Romero, Robin Shoaps)
- 2007-2009 *Lab Manager and Research Assistant* (Prof. Robin Shoaps, Linguistic Anthropology)
The Karen Landahl Center for Linguistics Research, University of Chicago
- 1998-2001 *International Staff*, Guatemalan Cultural Action (ACG)
Guatemala and Chiapas, Mexico
- 1996-1997 *Program Assistant*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C.
- 1997 *Research Intern*, The National Security Archives, Gelman Library,
George Washington University, Washington, D.C.
- 1996 *Research Intern*, Human Rights Documentation Exchange, Austin, Texas